

# Notions of Ecological Citizenship in Climate Justice Campaigns

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## Abstract

Within the climate change debate, organisations within the environment movement who stress a specific type of differentiated approach have come to be referred to as climate justice campaigns. These campaigns advocate a differentiated approach based on the recognition of historical contributions to the problem, an awareness of the colonial past, and current resource extraction. Thus they advocate solutions to the problem that recognise these inequities. Through the embrace and application of the environmental justice “lens” to the issue of global warming, these groups advocate a very particular position on global environmental issues.

The criteria of justice necessitates that groups and movements who subscribe to this viewpoint reconsider important questions re-presented by shared ecological issues. Thorny challenges around individualism versus community, disjunctures between human beings and their consumption, issues around the displacement of environmental damage (physical and temporal), as well the human relationship with the environment is re-problematised. In doing so, this paper argues, climate justice campaigns have contributed to the discussion of an “ecological citizenship”. A distinct conception of what this citizenship might entail is implicit in the work of climate justice groups. This notion of ecological citizenship includes a right to sustainable and equitable consumption and environmental space, as well as the recognition of ecological debt and borrowing, the importance of compensation and protection, as well as respect for sovereignty, human, cultural and identity rights in relation to the consideration of environmental issues.

## Introduction

*Human beings have obligations to animals, trees, mountains, oceans and other members of the biotic community ... the limits that this places on human action are severe ... [and] ... no existing political vocabulary has managed to capture this transformation in the relationship between society and nature (Smith 1998, 99).*

Climate change campaigns across the world are characterised by significant differences in the focus, orientation, and understandings of the groups involved. Research into the campaigns of major environmental groups in Australia revealed some interesting findings on the nature of climate change campaigns. While revealing expected differences in the targets of climate change campaigns, orientation of campaign, and campaigning methods, a group of campaigners and organisations displayed a particular conception of the measure of good environmental decisions. Climate justice campaigns studied during this research project displayed a well evolved, and articulated notion of ecological citizenship at the core of the advocacy and campaigning work of a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The paper proceeds by outlining the research project on climate change campaigns in Australia that garnered these insights into the position of climate justice groups, and their philosophy. Following this, a discussion and analysis of the reasons behind the embrace of the approach of these groups, and an outline of the specifics of a climate justice perspective are conducted. Lastly, the paper argues that the position and campaign ethics of Friends of the Earth (FoE) in relation to global warming represents the articulation of a notion of ecological citizenship. This understanding of ecological citizenship is characterised by equity of consumption and environmental space, the recognition of ecological debt and borrowing, the importance of compensation and protection, as well as respect for human, cultural and identity rights in relation to the consideration of environmental issues. This conception of ecological citizenship clearly goes beyond recommendations for good environmental governance, instead encompassing a vision of the good life, and a recommendation for ethical individual and community citizenship.

### **The Research Project - Climate Campaigns in Australia**

*Rather than delimiting environmental protection to a separate policy sector or a specialized area of scientific-technical competence, there is a growing awareness that changes need to take place throughout the entire society if there is to be an adequate alleviation of environmental problems (Jamison and Ring 2000, 3).*

These findings emerged from a pilot research project on Australian climate change campaigns conducted by the author in 2004<sup>1</sup>. The project sought to investigate the understandings of climate change campaigners from non-governmental organisations in Australia relating in climate change. It did this by considering their particular campaign focus and its aspects, other campaigns in the Australian arena, and a focus on social justice issues within climate change. The project began by establishing contact with a number of prominent climate change campaigners throughout Australia. These individuals were identified through a survey of contemporary media commentary on climate change issues in Australia, ascertaining the non-governmental organisations involved in current debates around climate, and the staff members involved in those campaigns. The eventual interviewees were mainly full-time, employed campaigners within non-governmental organisations, but several individuals were representatives of organisations who occupied an unpaid position. Identified individuals were contacted to discuss the project and their potential participation; a total of 10 individuals were interviewed. Subsequently, involved individuals were asked to nominate other campaigners involved in climate change that they thought were significant to speak to in regard to the Australian non-governmental sector. This method is referred to as “snowball sampling”.

Snowball sampling is used in qualitative research design and method across a range of fields and disciplines. The most important advantage of the technique is that the approach enables the researcher to benefit from the participants’ understandings and knowledge of the target individuals and the community

relevant to the research project. "Snowball sampling is a method that has been used in the social sciences to study sensitive topics, rare traits, personal networks, and social relationships. The method involves the selection of samples utilizing "insider" knowledge and referral chains among subjects who possess common traits that are of research interest" (Kaplan, Korf, and Sterk 1987, 566). Thus, as a method of selection of activists involved in climate change campaigning, snowball sampling is an appropriate and useful tool.

The primary research tool to establish and evaluate campaigner views and attitudes was in-depth interviewing. The in-depth interview can be viewed as "a conversation between researcher and informant focussing on the informant's perception of self, life and experience, and expressed in his or her own words" (Minichiello 1990, 158). The use of this method provides the chance for those interviewed to express their ideas, thoughts and views in their own words, through conversations that take place facilitated by a structured, but open-ended interview process (Minichiello, 1990; Reinharz, 1992). The interview process utilised a semi-structured approach, which provided a guide for the conduct of interviews, while enabling free interaction between the researcher and the interviewee(s) (McCracken, 1988). The interview schedule provided to participants ahead of the interview listed issues and topics to guide the interview process. The intention was to provide an open and only loosely structured approach to each individual interview while maintaining a consistent focus in the discussions with each campaigner involved. The inclusion of broad open-ended questions around climate campaigns in Australia enabled participants to discuss and explore their views at length, and to raise a diverse range of issues they considered pertinent to the research project.

## Climate Justice – The Ethics of Global Warming

*... Global warming was actually a result of the lifestyles of the rich, of the North countries, and so therefore there was a quite profound human rights dimension, not only in terms of resolving that problem but also in terms of the impacts of that problem, that it was the poor who were least responsible for creating the problem in the first place were actually paying the highest costs ... (Walker 2004).*

This paper focuses on the climate justice campaign of Friends of the Earth (Australia). I argue that Friends of the Earth's (FoE's) climate change campaign represents the clearest example of a social justice oriented response to global warming in the Australian context. While examples exist of other campaigns with a social justice aspect<sup>2</sup>, the FoE campaign represents the best example of one informed and designed around a social justice and environmental justice understanding of the issue. The naming of the campaign as one of *climate justice*, suggests both an implicit and explicit awareness of this orientation. The FoE orientation is also indicative of a consciously ethical approach to the issue of global warming.

Interviews with the two campaigners working on climate change and related issues for FoE in Australia revealed that the organisation is aware of the difference in their campaign orientation in comparison to other environmental organisations working on climate change issues. The campaigners highlighted the lack of a social justice perspective in other Australian groups: "there wasn't any organisation that was specifically or explicitly addressing the social issues around climate change ... [compared to FoE's] ... dual interest in environmental sustainability and social justice" (Long 2004). In particular, the campaigners and the organisation had noted that the climate issue was handled very differently by other groups: "... other large green groups ... were very engaged with industry, very focussed on lobbying around ratification ... attempting to influence government ... at state or Federal levels ..." (Walker 2004).

During the followup negotiations to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bonn in 2000, a FoE (Australia) participant "was just really inspired ... by the testimonies and the work that was coming from the South and the focus of the groups from the South ... and also from that very kind of grass roots and direct action orientation" (Walker 2004). Walker suggests that while, "[T]he climate justice approach [was] ... influenced by ... coming into contact with grassroots kind of more radical climate change campaigners in Europe, particularly Rising Tide ... " (Walker 2004), that there are other significant reasons, which are related to the nature of the organisation. FoE is an international organisation with a presence in over 70 countries, and substantial representation from Southern countries in their network. "[W]e had a biennial general meeting and it was in Croatia this year and it's now in 72 countries, we're now finally at the point where ... the Southerners are actually equally in number, we work on a one group, one vote basis, ... because obviously the

majority world will continue to grow so the network will continue to be skewed towards the majority” (Walker 2004).

Thus, the organisation is self-consciously embracing a different approach to the issue of climate change and a way of seeing issues which sets it apart by:

*“... evolving to more a social ecology or social justice movement rather than a traditional Western/European quality of life, biodiversity conservation focus network ... [because an] ... inherent fundamental flaw with a lot of modern environmentalism ... I think that you have to come from a social justice perspective to be really relevant in this day and age ...”* (Walker 2004).

This social justice orientation is widely referred to in the literature on the environment movement as an *environmental justice* approach. The discourse of environmental justice, earlier brought to bear on urban industrial environmental problems, including the siting of toxic waste dumps, polluting chemical industries and waste processing facilities in largely black and Hispanic lower socio-economic neighbourhoods in the United States (Bullard 1983, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1995).

Campaigns mainly on toxic waste related issues pointed out the correlations between race and class, and environmental risk in the workplace and the community. Race was a predominant characteristic within the evolution of the environmental justice movement in the United States, which was the first movement to “link environment and race, class, gender, and social justice concerns in an explicit framework” (Taylor 2000, 42). In other countries, while race has been less important, the dimension of socio-economic disadvantage has proven to be significant. For example, in the UK, communities characterised by economic depression, and social dysfunction are those most affected by industrial pollution (Agyeman 2002, 40). As these connections became drawn, attention was also concentrated to the often unequal contributions of different sectors of society to the production and consumption that introduces environmental risks. The over-consumption by the privileged of those items that create these risks, and their ability to purchase “protection” from these risks through better housing, better medical care, and better nutrition is a recurrent theme.

With the advent of global environmental problems and their entry onto the international political agenda, the parallel to the contributions versus burdens of lesser developed countries in these issues was highlighted (Esteva 1992; Hofrichter 1993; Khor 1993). The discourse of environmental justice has focussed attention on the disproportionate production of toxic and hazardous wastes by developed countries, and their export of these risks to lesser developed countries lacking the capacity to treat or store them safely. Beck argues in his work that risk has become central to modern politics and an understanding of how ecological concerns are explored and negotiated in contemporary societies (1995). He also notes the importance of the “second age of modernity” in opening the way for transnational risk communities and the recognition of globalised risks (2000) that characterised environmental justice movements and approaches.

Such understandings and communities allow campaigners to point out that the destination for old growth timbers from tropical rainforests in the lesser developed world was for furniture and flooring in upmarket developed world homes. The shift of industrial processing and manufacturing from the developed world meant a cleaner environment in developed nations, as well as uninterrupted affordable consumption, but the cost for lesser developed countries was increased industrial pollution and unsafe workplaces. Shiva (2002) has referred to this process whereby the lesser developed world loses control of its natural resources, and bears the majority of environmental risks as “environmental apartheid”, while other critical academics have referred to “environmental colonialism” (Agarwal & Narain 1991; Redclift, 1992; Jasanoff, 1993; Nelson 2003). Thus, environmental justice has become a globally oriented discourse highlighting the “winners” and “losers” in relation to the burdens and costs arising *unequally* from environmental issues. However, Agyaman (2002, 34) argues that the discourse of environmental justice goes beyond mere considerations of environmental *equity* to include an element of participatory decision making and self-determination for communities.

It now refers to a broader attempt in some sectors of the movement to encompass a wider range of socio-political concerns in environmental debates. The movement has re-defined the environmental debate toward issues of justice, equity and rights. Thus, “[e]nvironmental problems are a component of social exclusion and an issue of social justice” (Agyaman 2002, 46). A narrow focus on environmental quality in the environmental movement inevitably misses the important aspect of human *equality*. “In the wake of the rapid dispersal of ideas which characterize the contemporary era of globalisation, peoples across the globe are intoning and rallying around novel concepts, norms and standards of environmental protection as a social justice objective” (Obiora 1999, 465).

Climate justice campaigns in particular highlight the unequal contributions to, and burdens arising from, the projected impacts of global warming. While the impacts of climate change are likely to be semi-democratic, conforming to Beck’s contention that in the risk society, everyone is affected (1992, 46), the ability to prepare for, insure against or adapt to these impacts rests squarely with the developed nations. Within the debate on global warming, FoE and others<sup>3</sup> have concentrated one particular facet – displacement of peoples induced by the impacts of climate change. The focus on the small island states of the Pacific is significant due not just to their high vulnerability under all projected scenarios (IPCC 1998), but most significantly because of their almost insignificant contribution to the greenhouse gas emissions producing climate change. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) that includes the Pacific Islands among its 35 member states, with a 0.06% share of the world’s current emissions, is collectively one of the least prodigious producers of climate changing gases (IPCC 2001).

*“FoE believes in equitable and sustainable use of resources across a fair share of what we call “environmental space” ... [which] ... can be defined as the amount of these resources*

*that each person can use without causing irreversible damage to the Earth"* (Davissen and Long 2003, 7).

The New Economic Foundation (NEF) also takes a clearly global environmental justice viewpoint. Their notion of ecological debt owed posits that when "citizens of one country take more than their fair share of a global environmental "common" such as the atmosphere" (2003, 33). The implications here are clear in terms of environmental justice: the responsibility for climate change rests proportionally with those who emit the most<sup>4</sup>. Along with this responsibility comes an obligation: countries that over-use or over-emit or over-consume, owe a debt to those who do not. That debt has produced uneven ecological damage, and inequality. The small island states of the Pacific are in line to reap the overwhelming burden of the developed nations' fossil fuel dependency and profligacy beginning from the Industrial Revolution.

There is a mobilisation of the language of rights and responsibilities that weaves itself through the environmental justice literature of NGOs on climate change. A range of dimensions exist to these claims to rights, and one of the most prominent is in relation to cultural rights, and the rights of, particular indigenous people, to a connection with their traditional land or dwelling place, and their cultural practices. Recently, the Inuit announced their intention to seek redress through international law for the destruction of their cultural heritage, and the impingement on their cultural rights by the United States' refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol or curb their emissions. The Inuit claim stems from the encroachment of sea level rise, the shortening of the winter hunting season, and potential destruction of cultural heritage (Brown 2003). But cultural rights are not the only ones at stake in this debate. Elementary human rights are implicated through the issue of environmental refugees: "the fundamental principle of justice [states] that every individual is entitled to the protection of a state in a territory where they can earn the necessities of life" (Nash 1999, 229). At least five small island states may cease to exist – and this presents a new challenge for the international regime on refugees and human rights. FoE and others point to the current situation facing residents of Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Maldives, Niue and the Cateret Islands to illustrate the forthcoming plight of many Pacific islanders, as well residents of the wider Asian region, over the coming decades. The future is far from certain for those threatened by climate change, and those areas most at threat are those who can least afford to follow the status quo and institute "adaptation" strategies later. Several of the Pacific islands have instituted internal migration problems as a strategy to deal with emergent impacts<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, FoE's Climate Justice Campaign focuses on the issue of climate change in two significant ways: it highlights the disproportionate burden placed on the small island states, particularly rising sea level (Davissen & Long 2003) and it emphasises the unequal share of atmospheric space that Australia and other developed countries are utilising (polluting) through their energy-intensive lifestyles. But the



campaigners hint that their approach is even more than this: while the justice aspect is clear, there is an aspect that their approach suggests a model of citizenship, governance and the good life:

*“... climate change becomes, in a way, everything ... how we get our energy, how we live, how we trade, how we treat the environment, how we treat other people ... it’s almost like a lens that you look through the world at ... ” (Walker 2004).*

## Imagining an Ecological Citizenship?

*The framework needs to be human rights, internationalism and owning up to our responsibilities i.e. the ecological debt ... most people are basically good, most people basically do the right thing if they can and certainly if opportunities are presented to them to allow them to make good choices in their lives, and in their collective realm ... (Walker 2004).*

This paper argues that the climate justice campaign and its approach as explicated by FoE Australia represents a conception of ecological citizenship both implicitly and explicitly. The guiding principles within this configuration include sustainable and equitable consumption, equal right to environmental space, the recognition of the notions of ecological borrowing and ecological debt, the importance of compensation and protection, as well as a connection to human, cultural and identity rights. Taken together, these principles represent a well defined and cohesive conception of ecological citizenship, and a vision of the good life.

### *Equity of Consumption, Sustainable Consumption and Environmental Space*

A key component in FoE’s understanding about the nature of environmental problems in general, and global warming in particular, is related to the origin and exacerbation of these issues. Much of the literature on global environmental issues clearly highlights the history of Northern resource consumption, pollution and extraction since the Industrial Revolution (Agarwal & Narain 1991; Redclift, 1992; Jasanoff, 1993; Nelson 2003). Southern environmental activists and scholars are quick to highlight the inherent hypocrisy of Northern multilateral environmental agreements and urgings for Southern countries to contain their consumption, to reduce their emissions, to halt their resource extraction, and to contain their environmental pollution in light of their small contributions to these problems, relative to Northern countries (Shiva 2002; Esteva 1992; Hofrichter 1993; Khor 1993). This is especially true of climate change: “... global warming is a result of a minority of the world radically over-consuming and hence over-producing greenhouse gas ...” (Walker 2004).

Northern countries however are reticent to raise the issue of resource consumption in relation to environmental problems. In contemporary consumer culture, identity is constructed and reconstructed around consumption, and where prominent identifiers in society are related to an individual's consumption (Payne 2001; Warde 1994). Consumption is equated with status, and one's place in the social strata. Thus, governments are reluctant to question consumptive practices and their consequences, especially in an integrated global laissez-faire economy. This problem is explicitly recognised by environmental justice movements. "It's quite unpopular ... to talk about consumption as an issue within ... industrial countries like Australia" despite the clear relationship between "inequitable over-consumption, gross over-consumption of natural resources in the world" (Long 2004) and the current environmental problems being experienced within Northern countries, and via global environmental issues.

This dilemma has led FoE and others to embrace the notion of environmental space. This concept draws upon Carley and Spapens' (1997) idea of "equal distribution of resource consumption between countries on a per capita basis". The FoE formulation, environmental space, relies on the notion that there is a quantifiable sustainable measure of consumption (or pollution) of various resources. In the case of global warming, there would be a sustainable measure of total carbon emissions worldwide that could be established based on scientific determinations of the total emissions possible without unacceptable impact to the climate. Calculations such as this require good baseline scientific data, but also careful considerations of the nature of emissions and their potential impacts. Once a sustainable maximum emissions line was established, then the consideration is in relation to equality: "everybody has a right to their fair share of the world's natural resources and atmospheric space" (Long 2004). Thus, individually, the world's people all have an equal right to access the world's collective resources. FoE (Scotland) ran a similar campaign around the notion of "no less than our right to a decent environment; no more than our fair share of the Earth's resources" (FoE Scotland 2000).

This concept has been formalised and quantified using footprint analysis. The idea of footprint analysis is that the ecological impact of an individual or a community can be calculated mathematically based on their level and nature of consumption. Wackernagel and Rees (1996) originally proposed the ecological footprint concept specifically to highlight unequal and unsustainable consumption patterns in a mathematical way. Mobilisation of this tool has been popular amongst social justice movements as a method of highlighting the inequality of consumption patterns amongst individuals, but also between countries.

*"Because it became something really quantifiable that we could do this mathematic analysis – this many people in the world, this is a sustainable level of consumption – everybody gets an equal share of that. So that concept of environmental space was really bonding ... " (Long 2004).*

The ecological footprint tool itself has become embraced on a much wider basis than the social justice movement, often as an educational tool within the school system, or by government departments. For example, the Victorian EPA has a host of educational information about ecological footprints, and tools to calculate your individual footprint (EPA Victoria 2005). However, the mainstreaming of the use of the ecological footprint does not detract from its use in the environmental justice movement. It serve to point out the over-consumption of the North, but also to imply the critique and recommendations inherent in the discussions of environmental space.

*“ ... Global warming was actually a result of the lifestyles of the rich, of the North countries, and so therefore there was a quite profound human rights dimension, not only in terms of resolving that problem but also in terms of the impacts of that problem, that it was the poor who were least responsible for creating the problem in the first place were actually paying the highest costs and so it was clear the minute we started to unpack it ... ” (Walker 2004).*

Therefore, within the social justice perspective on climate change the obvious implications of advocating for equal environmental space, and the use of footprint analysis, is the recognition of a right to equitable consumption for all individuals, but also an obligation for the North to reduce its current levels of consumption.

#### *Environmental Debt, Compensation and Protection*

The logical extension of the arguments put forward in relation to environmental space and equity of consumption relates to a mechanism for compensation for past transgressions in terms of over-use of resources, but also over-extraction, and pollution, in particular greenhouse gas emissions in this case. This part of the social justice platform is informed by an understanding of the colonial past and global economic present of many Southern countries:

*“So it became a double whammy in that the global North was polluting a lot but they were also extracting massive resources from the South to do that polluting. So it became an extraction debt and a pollution debt and this became the whole of the Climate Debt that people started talking about” (Long 2004).*

Thus, there is a clear sense of rights and obligations informing a discussion about the impacts of past environmental degradation and over-consumption, and how this unequal situation might be righted in relation to the Southern countries:

*“... polluting nations have an onus of responsibility to look after and provide for people who are grossly affected and would have the most extreme level of adaptation to try and deal with ... ” (Long 2004).*

In terms of climate justice, the disproportionate burden likely to be placed on Southern nations in terms of impact is clearly seen in the reports and recommendations of the IPCC. The consequences of climate change in these countries is exacerbated by societies already experiencing social dislocation, economic dysfunction, poor urban infrastructure, the failing of rural agricultural and rural communities, and a high dependence on foreign aid and debt. For communities already experiencing such a serious catalogue of problems, the likely impact of rising sea levels, decreased agricultural productivity, salt intrusion, and an increase in extreme weather events, presents a situation of crisis proportions. However, the recognition that climate change is largely a Northern creation presents the argument for compensation and protection of the South:

*“... poor nations, why should they be responsible for in effect picking up the tab for someone else’s problem, that’s part of the argument ... because its part of owning up to that historical reality of the reason they’re being forced to move [displaced people or environmental refugees] is because of the historical choices of the global North in terms of consumption patterns so its part of foreignly creating an acknowledgement of the reality of the nature of displacement ... ” (Walker 2004).*

Consequently, Southern countries argue that the global North owes them a debt for violating their rights to equal environmental space by over-consuming and through over-pollution. This opens the way for claims about how that debt might be repaid, particularly as Southern countries contemplate the high cost of adaptation measures for global warming, and the high impact that climate change is expected to bring to their (vanishing) shores.

#### *Human Rights: Sovereignty, Cultural and Identity Rights*

Climate justice campaigns make not just an inherent, but also an explicit connection between issues of environmental justice, and issues of human rights. Just as the environmental justice approach drew issues of race and gender into its analysis, the climate justice campaign takes this analysis further with the inclusion of social inequality, and historical injustice to open up a dialogue around environmental problems and a range of human rights issues. FoE have been clear in their concerns that within other campaigns, human rights is a neglected issue in the environmental arena: “... no one in Australia was talking the justice, equity, or the human rights perspective ... [but] ... at its centre, global warming is a human rights ... issue, or ... problem, it’s, it’s, secondary that it’s economic, political and scientific and so on ...” (Walker 2004).

The climate justice campaign has embodied three separate notions of human rights in its advocacy. In particular, these ideas have been mobilised around the vulnerability of Pacific islands to salt water incursion, and eventual submersion through sea level rises resulting from global warming. The human rights of potentially displaced peoples are seen to be transgressed in a number of ways by the over-consuming, over-polluting and over-emitting countries of the global North. Such an approach acknowledges that while human rights is viewed as a socio-political issue far removed from environmental *quality* issues in Northern societies, that in the social justice perspective on environmental issues, human rights and environment are inextricably intertwined. There is a “reciprocal relationship between social and environmental welfare ... [and a recognition that] ... the struggle for environmental responsibility and justice ...” (Obiora 1999, 465) go hand in hand.

*“...[I]n Australia ... when people think human rights in environment it’s seen as an optional add on ... whereas in the majority world human rights is just a fundamental element in terms of sustainability whether you’re fighting ... oil production in Nigeria or free trade zones in Mexico, human rights and environment are not seen as separate things ... ” (Walker 2004).*

This awareness and understanding extends to the consequences of movement of peoples, and an understanding of the cultural importance that particularly indigenous peoples assign to connection to place or country. People in the Pacific who will potentially be displaced by climate change may lose the “ ... ability to maintain that when the entire landscape from which that heritage, that cultural heritage has developed goes and you don’t have any access to that landscape again ... particularly for indigenous people who have a strong connection to land and sea ... ” (Long 2004). This is also true for those individuals or groups who have traditional cultural practices that may be affected by climate-induced changes, or the impact of environmental problems. This would include the claims of the Inuit that global warming is impacting on their cultural practices due to the reduction in snow and ice cover in Northern Canada and the Arctic, and the impact on the populations that they traditionally hunt (Brown 2003). The embrace of a concept of a right to cultural tradition and cultural practice has important implications, especially in terms of obligations and responsibilities.

A special case of cultural and identity rights is presented by the potential for countries to be submerged due to global warming, or to be degraded beyond repair by environmental problems. Environmental justice and climate justice campaigns highlight that conventional approaches to thinking about the problem, its impact, and suggested solutions miss the important issue of human, cultural and identity rights:

*"I read a statement from one of the chief members of ABARE ... he actually said it would be cheaper to relocate all the people of the Pacific rather than [for] Australia to give up coal ... it just shows such a gross misunderstanding about the impact of climate change on human rights and people's lives and sense of identity and nationhood ... " (Long 2004).*

Climate justice campaigns clearly conceive of the right of individuals and communities to retain a sense of personal and national identity which stems not just from a right to their "place", but also how important that is in terms of human rights overall. This has been expressed as an individual right to sovereignty: "... peoples' right to politically or publicly identify as being from a particular nation ..." (Long 2004). Such a right is only possible with the acknowledgement of the obligations and responsibilities of the North to provide compensation and protection for those countries of the South who find their place and sovereignty threatened. As such, suggestions of relocating individuals or communities affected by climate change fall outside the parameters of an acceptable policy because of a right to identity and sovereignty. However, in a scenario of required relocation, the climate justice position on displaced peoples via climate change is clear. The current position of the international community and national governments on the issue is to reject any suggestion that they represent climate refugees or environmental refugees. But,

*"... ethically, its troublesome ... you get all these displaced people, they're not technically oppressed by their national government so therefore the national governments should look after them, but if you think of Ethiopia or Iran or Tuvalu those governments haven't actually created the problem, it's, it's the over-consumers in the North, so it seems incredibly ... rude ... an unpleasant thing to do to suggest well ... if you're displaced you should then go to our national government for support and therefore you shouldn't be recognised as a refugee" (Walker 2004).*

Thus, climate refugees – those displaced through climate-induced changes – also represent an obligation on the part of the international community, despite their failure to "fit" within the current refugee regime. This reinforces the concept of compensation and protection of those negatively affected by the present and historical actions of the global North.

## **Preliminary Conclusions**

*"Human rights, an ecologically sound environment, sustainable development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible"(UN 1994).*

The work and advocacy of climate justice campaigns, such as the one by FoE Australia, implicitly and explicitly outlines a significant contribution to the debate and negotiation of an understanding of ecological citizenship. However, there are some prominent areas of contention that remain unsettled, and open to problems within the idea of an ecological citizenship that will need to be clarified. I argue that there are three important questions that still need to be answered: the de-coupling of citizenship from the state, the sense of place problem, and the individual versus the community. These three issues suggest clear areas for future research:

(1) Contemporary notions of citizenship are characterised by state-centricity, and display particular notions about citizenship that are characterised by political and legal rights, but neglect cultural and economic rights which are at the heart of the debate about global environmental issues. How a concept of ecological citizenship might embrace recognition of the continuing importance of the state, while also fostering and compelling the notion of a global sense of identity and citizenship remains a question to be answered.

(2) While sense of place is highlighted as being a critical site for the connection of individuals to environment, and to a sense of ecological citizenship, it is also highly problematic in terms of fostering a global sense of ecological responsibility.

*“In the context of the dominant global consciousness, singularised ideals of dwelling encourage us to direct our honouring of place towards an ‘official’ singular idealised special place consciously identified with self, while disregarding the many unrecognised places that provide our material support, most of which, in a global market, are likely to elude knowledge and responsibility” (Plumwood 2004).*

While place can connect us to spaces we know, it can disconnect us, and render invisible the spaces we don't. For ecological citizenship, place needs to be globalised, and communities must always be seen as in relationship with other, downstream communities, rather than as singular, isolated and self-sufficient.

(3) Citizenship is classically conceived in an individual sense: an individual's connection to the state, their rights, and their responding responsibilities. Other important concepts connected to the debate about ecological citizenship are also individual in nature; these include ecological footprints, the right to environment, and well as cultural and traditional rights. This presents two separate issues in relation to global environmental responsibility. Firstly, how do we reconcile this with a corporate world, and the reality of environmental damage caused by those entities that are not individuals? Secondly, is an individual conception of ecological citizenship and responsibilities meaningfully enough in terms of global environmental issues without also having a related understanding of the positioning of the individual within the global, recognition of their connection to a collective historical past of consumption and extraction, and their connection to a present state apparatus which is still involved in these activities on their behalf?

These questions indicate the substantial areas for future work within the ecological citizenship debate. However, the contribution of those NGOs working on global warming from an environmental justice perspective have made an invaluable contribution to thinking about the good life, and environmental responsibilities and obligations in a global world. Just as Taylor argues that the new environmental paradigm has given way to the environmental justice paradigm (Taylor 2000, 542), the transformative nature of the principles and practices of a social justice perspective are inevitably leading the environmental justice paradigm toward a recognition of the rights and responsibilities of individuals and communities in relation to environmental degradation. This inherently suggests a notion of ecological citizenship. The implications of this are far reaching. While an environmental justice viewpoint has moved debate and reform away from purely environmental quality and conservation issues towards questions of socio-political reform, and asks questions of equity and equality, ecological citizenship requires more. Contemplation of ecological citizenship demands a reconception of the ethical and moral imperatives of global society, but also recognition of the rights and obligations of both individuals and communities. These rights and responsibilities bind individuals, communities, societies, corporate interests and global society together in a complex set of relationships. To honour these rights and responsibilities requires a reformation of understandings of value, of classical liberal privileging of individual rights over the community, and a new vision of the good life.

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## Notes

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\* Cassandra Star was present at the first Ecopolitics Association of Australasia AGM, and has been involved in the organisation in various capacities since 1997. She is currently El Presidente, and laments the lack of perks.

Cassandra teaches in the Department of Politics and Public Policy at Griffith University, and is a member of the Centre for Governance and Public Policy's environment and indigenous stream. She currently organises their weekly seminar series on environmental politics. Her research interests include global environmental politics, the politics of global warming, and related issues in green political theory.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, a number of local councils run climate change programs which have a social justice aspect by targeting the needs of lower socio-economic groups, without orienting their whole program or campaign around a social justice perspective. Moreland City Council in Melbourne's inner city runs one such program.

<sup>3</sup> For brevity, only Friends of the Earth's Australian campaign is discussed in this paper, but other significant campaigns with a similar focus are being run by: Rising Tide International (United Kingdom and The Netherlands), Climate Chaos (The Czech Republic), Climate Justice Programme (US climate litigation campaign), Australia's Climate Justice Programme (by the Climate Action Network Australia, and law firm Maurice Blackburn Cashman) and Amsterdam Radical Climate Action (The Netherlands).

<sup>4</sup> There are different ways to conceive of who it is that emits "the most". For example, while Australia is a small total emissions polluter, it is one of the worst emitters of carbon *per capita*. The FoE conception seems to draw upon both ideas in its configuration of ecological citizenship – individuals have a responsibility for their impact, reinforcing the per capita view, but individual countries, and the global North are identified and criticised for producing the majority of *total* emissions.

<sup>5</sup> Kiribati has begun moving vulnerable populations to outlying islands with higher ground, Niue accepted the migration of seven families from Tuvalu, the Cateret Islands of Papua New Guinea have experienced significant salination related crop failure and will need to be relocated. Tuvalu also came to a widely publicised resettlement agreement with New Zealand which will see at least half of its population moved within the next decade.